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A Checklist of Birds of Choolanur Peacock Reserve and its Environs

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Choolanur Peafowl Reserve is geographically located at (10.68N, 76.43E) with an average altitude of c.120m MSL. A section of the Western Ghats protrudes from the Nelliampathies into the midlands of Central Kerala gradually descending as the hills of Peechi and Pattikkad; further descending through Vazhani and finally ending up as a series of small rolling hillocks before it flattens on to the flood plains of the river Bharathapuzha. Choolanur lies to the extreme tip of these hillocks and hardly has any Ghat elements in its eco-system. Generally vegetation and forest type are more or less similar to the ones found in Wynad plateau; open forest with small to medium sized trees with thick bushes in between. This habitat makes it an ideal choice for Indian Peafowl *Pavo cistatus* and the presence of a good population here has made the forest department to call it as a “Peacock Reserve”. Administratively, this forest section comes under two ranges, Alathur Range (50 ha) of the Nemmara Division and Vadakkanchery Range (150ha) of the Thrissur Division.

Avifauna, though not spectacular, is interesting from a birding perspective as it is easy to watch birds (even without binoculars!) here by the nature of small trees and shrubs. It is also an area close to the heart for any amateur birder from Kerala as it not far away from Kavassery, the place where late Prof. K.K. Neelakantan (Induchoodan) had spent his childhood and many vacations bird watching.

The present checklist is an attempt to paint the birdlife of this interesting habitat and has been prepared after eight half-day visits (roughly 35-40 field hours) mainly spread over the months from June to December (1994 – 2001). Hence, the list is not comprehensive and some common species may be missing.

| Sl. No. | Common Name (Synopsis No.) | Scientific Name |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Little Cormorant (28) | <i>Phalacrocorax niger</i> (Vieillot, 1817) |
| 2 | Little Egret (49) | <i>Egretta garzetta</i> (Linnaeus, 1766) |
| 3 | Indian Pond-Heron (42-42a) | <i>Ardeola grayii</i> (Sykes, 1832) |
| 4 | Median Egret (47, 48) | <i>Mesophoyx intermedia</i> (Wagler, 1829) |
| 5 | Cattle Egret (44) | <i>Bubulcus ibis</i> (Linnaeus, 1758) |
| 6 | White-necked Stork (62) | <i>Ciconia episcopus</i> (Boddaert, 1783) |
| 7 | Black-shouldered Kite (124) | <i>Elanus caeruleus</i> (Desfontaines, 1789) |
| 8 | Black Kite (132-134) | <i>Milvus migrans</i> (Boddaert, 1783) |
| 9 | Brahminy Kite (135) | <i>Haliastur indus</i> (Boddaert, 1783) |
| 10 | Crested Serpent-Eagle (196-200) | <i>Spilornis cheela</i> (Latham, 1790) |
| 11 | Shikra (137-140) | <i>Accipiter badius</i> (Gmelin, 1788) |
| 12 | Changeable Hawk-Eagle (160-162) | <i>Spizaetus cirrhatus</i> (Gmelin, 1788) |
| 13 | Common Kestrel (222-224) | <i>Falco tinnunculus</i> Linnaeus, 1758 |

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| 14 | Grey Francolin (244-246) | <i>Francolinus pondicerianus</i> (Gmelin, 1789) |
| 15 | Red Spurfowl (275-277) | <i>Galloperdix spadicea</i> (Gmelin, 1789) |
| 16 | Indian Peafowl (311) | <i>Pavo cristatus</i> Linnaeus, 1758 |
| 17 | White-breasted Waterhen (343-345) | <i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i> (Pennant, 1769) |
| 18 | Red-wattled Lapwing (366-368) | <i>Vanellus indicus</i> (Boddaert, 1783) |
| 19 | Green Sandpiper (397) | <i>Tringa ochropus</i> Linnaeus, 1758 |
| 20 | Common Sandpiper (401) | <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i> Linnaeus, 1758 |
| 21 | Blue Rock Pigeon (516-517) | <i>Columba livia</i> Gmelin, 1789 |
| 22 | Spotted Dove (537-540) | <i>Streptopelia chinensis</i> (Scopoli, 1786) |
| 23 | Yellow-legged Green-Pigeon (503-505) | <i>Treron phoenicoptera</i> (Latham, 1790) |
| 24 | Indian Hanging-Parrot (566, 567) | <i>Loriculus vernalis</i> (Sparrman, 1787) |
| 25 | Rose-ringed Parakeet (549-550) | <i>Psittacula krameri</i> (Scopoli, 1769) |
| 26 | Plum-headed Parakeet (557-558) | <i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i> (Linnaeus, 1766) |
| 27 | Brainfever Bird (573-574) | <i>Hierococcyx varius</i> (Vahl, 1797) |
| 28 | Indian Cuckoo (576) | <i>Cuculus micropterus</i> Gould, 1838 |
| 29 | Banded Bay Cuckoo (582-583) | <i>Cacomantis sonneratii</i> (Latham, 1790) |
| 30 | Asian Koel (590-592) | <i>Eudynamys scolopacea</i> (Linnaeus, 1758) |
| 31 | Small Green-billed Malkoha (595) | <i>Phaenicophaeus viridirostris</i> (Jerdon, 1840) |
| 32 | Lesser Coucal (605) | <i>Phaenicophaeus leschenaultii</i> (Lesson, 1830) |
| 33 | Greater Coucal (600-602) | <i>Centropus bengalensis</i> (Gmelin, 1788) |
| 34 | Franklin's Nightjar (682) | <i>Caprimulgus affinis</i> Horsfield, 1821 |
| 35 | Common Indian Nightjar (680-681) | <i>Caprimulgus asiaticus</i> Latham, 1790 |
| 36 | Indian Edible-nest Swiftlet (685) | <i>Collocalia unicolor</i> (Jerdon, 1840) |
| 37 | Brown-backed Needletail-Swift (691) | <i>Hirundapus giganteus</i> (Temminck, 1846) |
| 38 | Asian Palm-Swift (707-708) | <i>Cypsiurus balasiensis</i> (J.E. Gray, 1829) |
| 39 | Alpine Swift (693-695) | <i>Tachymarptis melba</i> (Linnaeus, 1758) |
| 40 | House Swift (702-706) | <i>Apus affinis</i> (J.E. Gray, 1830) |
| 41 | Crested Tree-Swift (709) | <i>Hemiprocne coronata</i> (Tickell, 1833) |
| 42 | Small Blue Kingfisher (722-724) | <i>Alcedo atthis</i> (Linnaeus, 1758) |
| 43 | Stork-billed Kingfisher (730-732) | <i>Halcyon capensis</i> (Linnaeus, 1766) |
| 44 | White-breasted Kingfisher (735-738) | <i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i> (Linnaeus, 1758) |
| 45 | Lesser Pied Kingfisher (719-720) | <i>Ceryle rudis</i> (Linnaeus, 1758) |
| 46 | Small Bee-eater (749-752) | <i>Merops orientalis</i> Latham, 1801 |
| 47 | Blue-tailed Bee-eater (748) | <i>Merops philippinus</i> Linnaeus, 1766 |
| 48 | Indian Roller (755-757) | <i>Coracias benghalensis</i> (Linnaeus, 1758) |
| 49 | Common Hoopoe (763-766) | <i>Upupa epops</i> Linnaeus, 1758 |

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| 50 | Indian Grey Hornbill (767) | <i>Ocyrceros birostris</i> (Scopoli, 1786) |
| 51 | White-cheeked Barbet (785) | <i>Megalaima viridis</i> (Boddaert, 1783) |
| 52 | Coppersmith Barbet (792) | <i>Megalaima haemacephala</i> (P.L.S. Müller, 1776) |
| 53 | Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker (851-854) | <i>Dendrocopos nanus</i> (Vigors, 1832) |
| 54 | Yellow-fronted Pied Woodpecker (847) | <i>Dendrocopos mahrattensis</i> (Latham, 1801) |
| 55 | Little Scaly-bellied Green Woodpecker (808) | <i>Picus xanthopygaeus</i> (J.E. Gray & G.R. Gray, 1846) |
| 56 | Lesser Golden-backed Woodpecker (818-823) | <i>Dinopium benghalense</i> (Linnaeus, 1758) |
| 57 | Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark (878) | <i>Eremopterix grisea</i> (Scopoli, 1786) |
| 58 | Jerdon's Bush-Lark (874) | <i>Mirafra affinis</i> Blyth, 1845 |
| 59 | Oriental Skylark (904-909) | <i>Alauda gulgula</i> Franklin, 1831 |
| 60 | Common Swallow (916-918) | <i>Hirundo rustica</i> Linnaeus, 1758 |
| 61 | Red-rumped Swallow (923-928) | <i>Hirundo daurica</i> Linnaeus, 1771 |
| 62 | Large Pied Wagtail (1891) | <i>Motacilla maderaspatensis</i> Gmelin, 1789 |
| 63 | Grey Wagtail (1884) | <i>Motacilla cinerea</i> Tunstall, 1771 |
| 64 | Paddyfield Pipit (1858-1860) | <i>Anthus rufulus</i> Vieillot, 1818 |
| 65 | Black-headed Cuckoo-Shrike (1078-1079) | <i>Coracina melanoptera</i> (Rüppell, 1839) |
| 66 | Small Minivet (1090-1095) | <i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i> (Linnaeus, 1766) |
| 67 | Common Woodshrike (1069-1071) | <i>Tephrodornis pondicerianus</i> (Gmelin, 1789) |
| 68 | Red-whiskered Bulbul (1118-1122) | <i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i> (Linnaeus, 1758) |
| 69 | Red-vented Bulbul (1126-1132) | <i>Pycnonotus cafer</i> (Linnaeus, 1766) |
| 70 | White-browed Bulbul (1138-1139) | <i>Pycnonotus luteolus</i> (Lesson, 1841) |
| 71 | Common Iora (1097-1101) | <i>Aegithina tiphia</i> (Linnaeus, 1758) |
| 72 | Jerdon's Chloropsis (1107-1108) | <i>Chloropsis cochinchinensis</i> (Gmelin, 1788) |
| 73 | Brown Shrike (949-950a) | <i>Lanius cristatus</i> Linnaeus, 1758 |
| 74 | Orange-headed Thrush (1734) | <i>Zoothera citrina</i> cyanotus |
| 75 | Oriental Magpie-Robin (1661-1664) | <i>Copsychus saularis</i> (Linnaeus, 1758) |
| 76 | Indian Robin (1717-1721) | <i>Saxicoloides fulicata</i> (Linnaeus, 1776) |
| 77 | Pied Bushchat (1700-1703) | <i>Saxicola caprata</i> (Linnaeus, 1766) |
| 78 | Rufous-bellied Babbler (1219-1223) | <i>Dumetia hyperythra</i> (Franklin, 1831) |
| 79 | White-headed Babbler (1267-1268) | <i>Turdoides affinis</i> (Jerdon, 1847) |
| 80 | Streaked Fantail-Warbler (1498-1500a) | <i>Cisticola juncidis</i> (Rafinesque, 1810) |

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| 81 | Franklin's Prinia (1502-1505) | <i>Prinia hodgsonii</i> Blyth, 1844 |
| 82 | Ashy Prinia (1515-1518) | <i>Prinia socialis</i> Sykes, 1832 |
| 83 | Plain Prinia (1510-1514) | <i>Prinia inornata</i> Sykes, 1832 |
| 84 | Blyth's Reed-Warbler (1556) | <i>Acrocephalus dumetorum</i> Blyth, 1849 |
| 85 | Common Tailorbird (1535-1539) | <i>Orthotomus sutorius</i> (Pennant, 1769) |
| 86 | Greenish Leaf-Warbler (1602-1605) | <i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i> (Sundevall, 1837) |
| 87 | Asian Brown Flycatcher (1407) | <i>Muscicapa dauurica</i> Pallas, 1811 |
| 88 | Asian Paradise-Flycatcher (1460-1464) | <i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i> (Linnaeus, 1758) |
| 89 | White-browed Fantail-Flycatcher (1451-1453) | <i>Rhipidura aureola</i> Lesson, 1830 |
| 90 | Tickell's Flowerpecker (1899-1900) | <i>Dicaeum erythrorhynchos</i> (Latham, 1790) |
| 91 | Purple-rumped Sunbird (1907-1908) | <i>Nectarinia zeylonica</i> (Linnaeus, 1766) |
| 92 | Purple Sunbird (1916-1918) | <i>Nectarinia asiatica</i> (Latham, 1790) |
| 93 | Loten's Sunbird (1911-1912) | <i>Nectarinia lotenia</i> (Linnaeus, 1766) |
| 94 | White-rumped Munia (1967-1970) | <i>Lonchura striata</i> (Linnaeus, 1766) |
| 95 | Spotted Munia (1974-1975) | <i>Lonchura punctulata</i> (Linnaeus, 1758) |
| 96 | Black-headed Munia (1976-1978) | <i>Lonchura malacca</i> (Linnaeus, 1766) |
| 97 | Yellow-throated Sparrow (1948-1949) | <i>Petronia xanthocollis</i> (Burton, 1838) |
| 98 | Baya Weaver (1957-1959) | <i>Ploceus philippinus</i> (Linnaeus, 1766) |
| 99 | Grey-headed Starling (987-989) | <i>Sturnus malabaricus</i> (Gmelin, 1789) |
| 100 | Grey-headed Starling (988) | <i>Sturnus malabaricus blythi</i> (Jerdon) |
| 101 | Brahminy Starling (994) | <i>Sturnus pagodarum</i> (Gmelin, 1789) |
| 102 | Common Myna (1006-1007) | <i>Acridotheres tristis</i> (Linnaeus, 1766) |
| 103 | Eurasian Golden Oriole (952-953) | <i>Oriolus oriolus</i> (Linnaeus, 1758) |
| 104 | Black-headed Oriole (958-960a) | <i>Oriolus xanthornus</i> (Linnaeus, 1758) |
| 105 | Black Drongo (962-964) | <i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i> Vieillot, 1817 |
| 106 | Ashy Drongo (965-966b) | <i>Dicrurus leucophaeus</i> Vieillot, 1817 |
| 107 | Bronzed Drongo (971) | <i>Dicrurus aeneus</i> Vieillot, 1817 |
| 108 | Ashy Woodswallow (982) | <i>Artamus fuscus</i> Vieillot, 1817 |
| 109 | Indian Treepie (1030a-1034) | <i>Dendrocitta vagabunda</i> (Latham, 1790) |
| 110 | House Crow (1048-1051) | <i>Corvus splendens</i> Vieillot, 1817 |
| 111 | Jungle Crow (1054-1057) | <i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i> Wagler, 1827 |

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